

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demand and Supply of Year 7 Jewish Secondary School Places in London
Executive Summary of Research from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)
Commissioned by PaJeS
28 June 2016

Background

There has been increasing concern across the community about the apparent shortage of places at Jewish secondary schools. An initial investigation by PaJeS showed a significant increase in applications to secondary schools and an increasing number of students in Jewish primary schools.

In order to ensure an informed discussion and enable a strategic response across the community, PaJeS commissioned a statistical assessment by JPR. The study examined applications and admissions to the mainstream Jewish secondary state schools in and around London: Hasmonean High School, JCoSS, JFS, King Solomon High School and Yavneh College, and also looked at Immanuel College, an independent school. This document outlines some of JPR's findings, and based on its assessment, attempts to explore potential demand.

Determining Factors

The two critical factors that impact on school numbers are:

- the number of Jewish children in any given year; and
- their preference for Jewish schools.

First Preference Applications

When looking at the total number of applications to state schools, a considerable degree of double counting is involved – the same student can appear on the list of applicants to several schools simultaneously. JPR's assessment is therefore based on *first preference applications*, which avoids double counting and gives a reasonable indication as to the total numbers applying.

There has been a significant increase in applications in the mainstream sector since 2011, but the most recent number is now likely to remain relatively constant. Of the two determining factors mentioned above, both impacted on the increase seen between 2011 and 2016. The number of Jewish children increased and the preference for Jewish secondary schooling increased as well. The Charedi sector shows longer-term growth, but in terms of our research, this is likely to have minimal impact on mainstream Jewish secondary schools in London, with the partial exception of Hasmonean. JPR research based on UK Census data shows a decline in the number of people in the age groups under 30 in the mainstream community, which in due course, is likely to result in a decrease in the long-term mainstream school population. Thus unless the preference goes up, the numbers applying to secondary schools will not go up.

Currently just under two out of three Jewish children are applying for a Jewish secondary school in the parts of London served by the Jewish schools investigated. Due to the increased numbers currently in Jewish primary schools our projections suggest an increase in applications to Jewish secondary schools. However, this is based on the assumption that the proportion desiring a Jewish secondary education at the newer schools in the community will be similar to the current schools.

Waiting Lists – the Unmet Demand

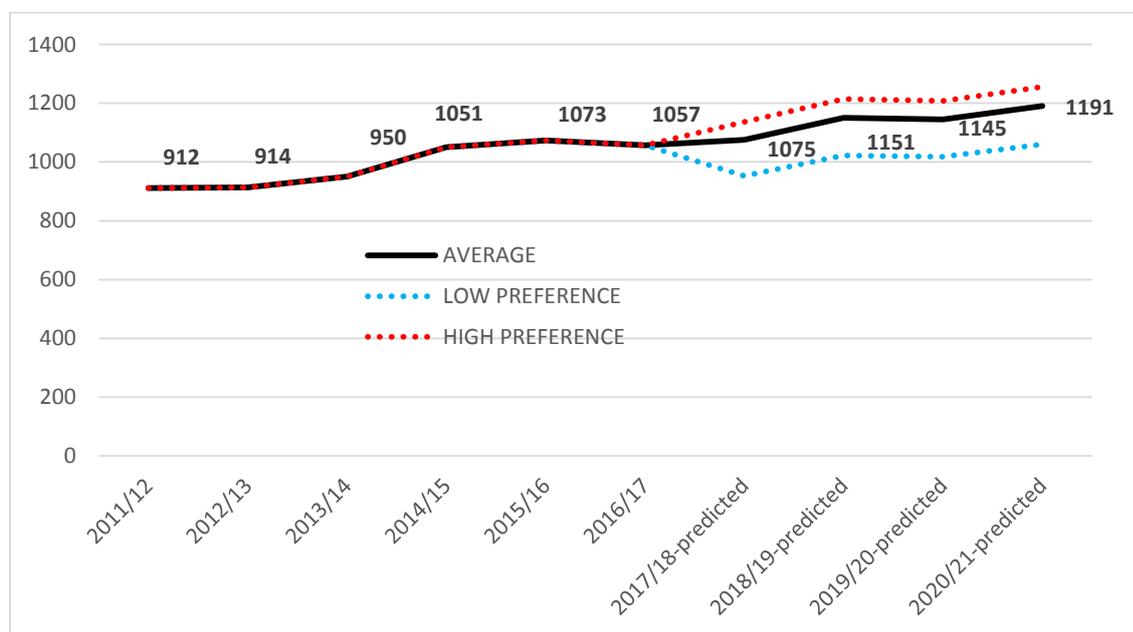
When conducting a provisional investigation of first preference applications (FPA) for 2015/16, JPR found that of those who failed to gain a place, 46% remained on the waiting list.

These parents divided into three key groups:

- Parents in non-Jewish state schools. This is the largest group and represents 43% of those remaining on the waiting list.
- Parents holding a place at a Jewish or non-Jewish independent school. The fact that these parents have remained on a waiting list, suggests that their desire to remain in state funded Jewish education has not been met. 85% of these parents are holding places in non-Jewish private schools.
- Parents holding a place at another Jewish state school. In reality it is not possible to provide every parent with a guaranteed option of a place at a preferred school and, thus we must work on the assumption that these children have been provided with a state funded Jewish education

For those parents who withdrew from the waiting list, a significant proportion would have held a preference for a Jewish or non-Jewish independent school, or have been offered a different Jewish state school. However, a proportion of these parents will have been offered, contrary to their wishes, provision outside of the Jewish schools' sector.

Projections of first place applications in London



Geographical Variances

There are significant variances between the projected demand in NW London and Redbridge, with an acute shortage limited to NW London. Whilst there is potentially provision available in Redbridge, for many applicants from NW London the distances are considerable and commuting is not seen as a viable option.

In Conclusion – a Tale of Two Cities?

For the Redbridge community there is currently significant overprovision and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.

Findings for NW London show that there is a significant under provision in Jewish state schools, which we estimate to be in the region of 90 places per year. We expect this level of under provision to continue for the next five years or so. However due to an increased proportion of children being educated in Jewish primary schools, our projections suggest the possibility of a further increase in demand for Jewish secondary school provision.

Rabbi David Meyer said: “This year a significant number of additional places were made available across the community’s schools, which has helped to reduce the increased demand somewhat. PaJeS will be meeting with Chairs and Heads of schools, and representatives proposing new schools, to facilitate informed discussion and explore a community wide strategy to meet demand.”

PaJeS would like to thank the JLC for sponsoring this research.